

REMARKS

In the outstanding Office Action, claims 1-15 were rejected. Claims 1, 3-5, 8, 9, 11-13 and 15 have been amended for clarification. New claim 16 has been added. Thus, claims 1, 3-9 and 11-16 are pending and under consideration. No new matter has been added. The rejections are traversed below.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. §102(b):

Claims 1-3, 8, and 9-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,671,428 ('428).

'428 discusses a collaborative document processing system for collaborative document processing work to be carried out by a plurality of users.

The present invention is directed to a document examination apparatus and method that enables a requester to select examiners for document examination based on corresponding attribute information of the examiners.

The Examiner compares the '428 collaborative document processing system for processing documents based on specified conditions with the present invention. In '428, conditions for each class of users, groups of users, documents, and parts of the documents are set such that processing of documents is executed only when these execution conditions are verified (see, column 17, lines 25-31 of '428). For example, conditions establishing a group decision making by a plurality of users such as "The target document can be submitted to the Journal publication if two of the involved users agree with it" and "The target document cannot be submitted to the journal publication if three of the involved users disagree with it" can be set (see, column 18, lines 1-9 of '428). This means that the '428 is directed to providing communication in relation to processing of documents when the documents are processed by a plurality of users.

In contrast, independent claims 1, 8 and 9 of the present invention recite storing "an electronic examination document" and "attribute information of examiners to examine the examination document", allowing "a requester to select a plurality of examiners based on the attribute information of examiners". Then, examination or review of the document is requested "to the selected examiners" and "examination results of the examination conducted by the examiners" is collected and displayed to at "a requester's side" and "at the examiners' side". This reduces labor and costs associated with document examination including copying costs,

document distribution, collection and summary control of examination results, etc.

It is submitted that the independent claims are patentable over '428.

For at least the above-mentioned reasons, claims depending from independent claims 1, 8 and 9 are patentably distinguishable over '428. The dependent claims are also independently patentable. For example, as recited in claim 3, the document examination includes setting "a degree of importance of the examination document corresponding to the attribute information of examiners" and controlling "permission or prohibition of browsing depending on the degree of importance". The '428 method does not teach or suggest, setting "a degree of importance of the examination document corresponding to the attribute information of examiners" and controlling "permission or prohibition of browsing depending on the degree of importance".

Therefore, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103(a):

Claims 4 and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over '428 in further view of IBM Technical Disclosure Bulletin (IBM Bulletin), and claims 5-7 and 13-15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over '428 in further view of U.S. Patent NO. 6,725,426 ('426).

Applicants respectfully assert that dependent claims 4-7 and 12-15 are allowable at least because of their dependence from claim 1, 8 and 9, and the reasons set forth above

The dependent claims are also are also independently patentable. For example, the Examiner relies on the IBM Bulletin as teaching a method in which the status of the result is checked and that reminders are sent to the examiner. The IBM Bulletin discusses an electronic scheduling device that reminds reviewers of electronic folders regarding due dates and due time (see, page 2 of IBM Bulletin) based on specifications set by an originator of the folder (see, page 6 of the IBM Bulletin).

The combination of the '428 system and the IBM Bulletin results in a collaborative document processing system for a collaborative document processing work to be carried out by a plurality of users, where reviewers of electronic folders are reminded of due dates based on specifications set by an originator of the folder.

In contrast, as recited in dependent claims 4 and 12 recite, the present invention checks

"the status of collection of the examination result, and urges for an examination to the examiner in charge before and after the preset collection period". This enables the examiners to be notified and be reminded of examination result collection periods by reviewing "status of collection of the examination result" and indicating collection periods in connection with the document to be examined.

Therefore, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully traversed.

NEW CLAIM:

New claim 16 is added to highlight that the present invention includes, "storing an electronic examination document and storing attribute information of examiners to examine the examination document" and "receiving a selection of a number of examiners based on the attribute information corresponding to the examiners from a requester" such that examination of the examination document is conducted by the selected number of examiners. The present invention also allows "examination results of the examination document" to be "collected and displayed to both the requester and the selected number of examiners".

It is respectfully asserted that the cited references do not teach or suggest the features of new claim 16.

CONCLUSION:

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

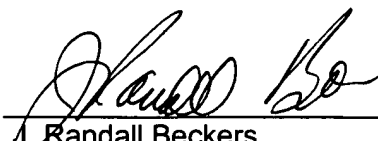
Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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